

FEMA Grants \$20M to California to Increase Earthquake Protection

Release Date: January 15, 2020

Oakland, Calif. – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has granted \$20 million to the State of California for its Earthquake Brace + Bolt (EBB) program. The grant will subsidize the work of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and the California Earthquake Authority (CEA) for earthquake retrofits on more than 6,300 at-risk structures likely to shake from their foundations in the event of an earthquake.

EBB addresses two seismic vulnerabilities found in many older homes that may have short, wood-framed cripple walls under the first floor. The retrofit bolts the house to the foundation, and if short, wood-framed walls are present under the first floor, the retrofit braces those walls with plywood to stiffen and help prevent the house from collapsing or sliding off its foundation during a quake.

EBB is a code-compliant retrofit that helps reduce damage and should allow families to remain in their homes after earthquakes. Each EBB recipient receives a subsidy of up to \$3,000 to bring their home up to seismic code compliance.

The \$33.3 million project is funded by \$20 million from FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), with the State of California and homeowners contributing the \$13.3 million balance.

Monday, Jan. 13, 2020 marked the first release of \$1.8 million in federal funds. Applicants will contribute the remaining \$1.3 million to retrofit 593 homes. Additional grant funds will be released incrementally throughout the life of the grant, as applications are approved by the state.

FEMA's HMGP helps states, territories, federally-recognized tribes, local communities and certain private, non-profit organizations become more resilient to potential infrastructure damage and reduce future disaster costs. In the past 30 years, FEMA has invested nearly \$1.3 billion to reduce disaster risks in California.



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